



INTRODUCTION

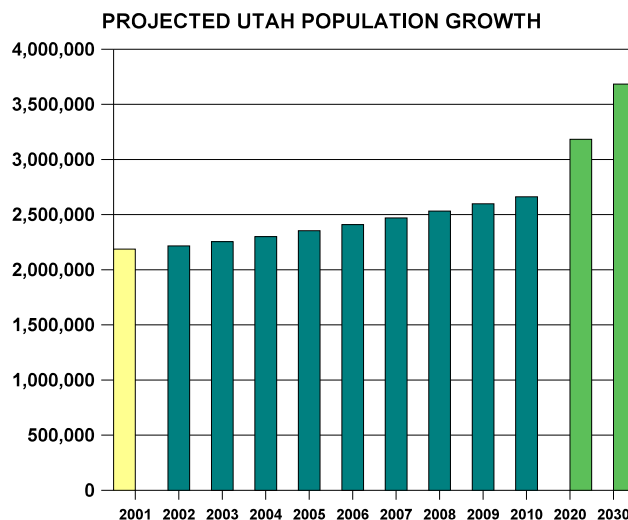
Demand for most library services (including holdings, circulation, visits, staffing, and space needs) can be indexed to population levels. The potential for growth or decline in population is therefore the first factor to be considered in determining future demands. Population studies and regression analysis, combined with State Library Division data on library use, allowed the study team to establish levels of need for a ten-year horizon.

The study team recognized, however, that population change alone might not be a valid predictor of future demand at a time when electronic information sources are changing the nature of library services. To consider the potential impact of these changes, the study team reviewed current studies of the impact of electronic services and then surveyed a representative group of Utah libraries about the impact of electronic services on their demand.

A third – and less quantifiable – factor emerged as libraries began to complete facilities surveys. Anecdotally, many librarians reported that their services are limited by existing facilities, funding levels, and staffing to a level significantly below what they perceive as the community's interest. Libraries that have built new buildings or undergone a major facilities expansion in recent years report a subsequent explosion in demand, visitation, and circulation. This in turn creates pressure to expand staffing and collections far beyond the level that could have been predicted by population growth alone. The persistence of these indicators suggests that planners would be well-advised to consider the potential impact of pent-up demand.

POPULATION GROWTH IN UTAH

The indicators suggest that Utah's population will increase dramatically in the coming years. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget projects



that Utah's population will grow steadily from 2,187,276 in 2001 to 2,661,902 in 2010. It will reach 3,193,388 in 2020 and 3,683,687 in 2030.

Statewide, growth can be expected in most, but not all, library jurisdictions. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget provided population estimates for 2000 through 2003 and for 2010 for most library jurisdictions. The study team extrapolated the data for the intervening years and, where data were not available for a library jurisdiction, used regression analysis to forecast population.

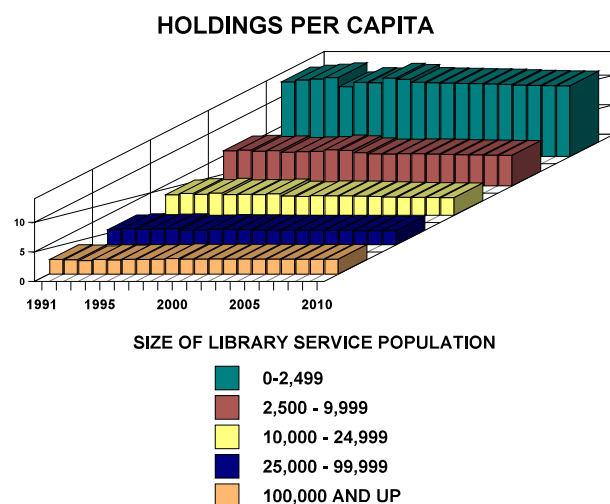
LIBRARY USAGE TRENDS, 1990 - 1999

The study team reviewed the core performance data compiled in the annual reports of the State Library Division from 1993 to 2000. The study focused on the three performance measures that most directly affect spatial analysis: visits, circulation, and



holdings. Data are grouped by the size of the library service population because distinct service population groups tend to differ in both space needs and performance characteristics.

Generally the study projects an overall increase in



Where results that would affect space analysis seemed discrepant with conditions observed in the libraries, the study team consulted the librarians to try to identify any anomalies so that the data could be normed. In some cases, for example, the library had conducted a one-time heavy weeding, resulting in a significant drop in holdings. Regression analysis alone would have projected this data to suggest an ongoing decline in collection size when in fact the collection size was steadily increasing after the weeding.

projected visits per capita (1%-4%) for all service populations except the 25,000 -99,999 group. The demographic report identifies a slight decline in holdings per capita (less than 1%) for all service populations. Circulation per capita showed slight increases for some service populations and minimal decreases for others.

The study team also documented a modest increase in expenditures per capita for all groups except those with a service population of 2,500 - 9,999. Turnover rates generally decreased (by a factor of less than 1.1% in the smaller libraries and a factor of 2.74% - 5.72% in the larger ones). The 2,500 - 9,999 population reported a small increase in turnover (0.3%).

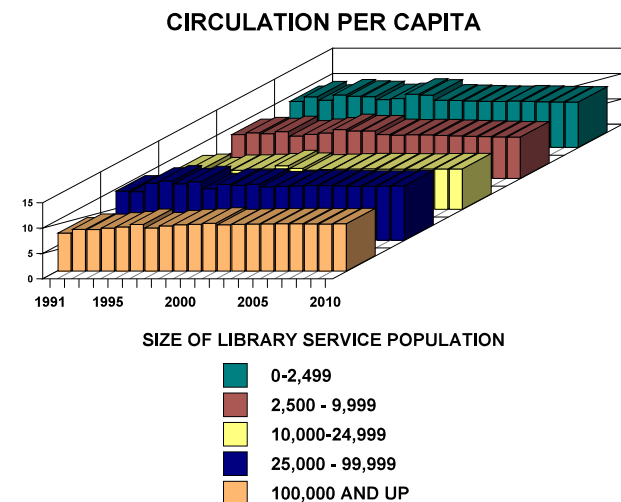
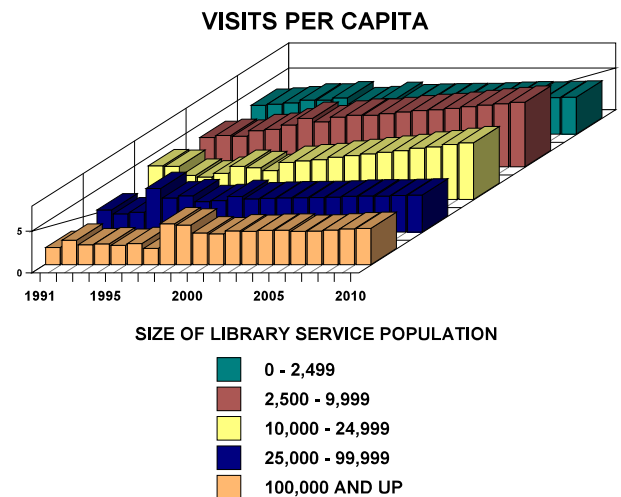


PENT-UP DEMAND

Many librarians report that existing facilities, funding, and staffing limit services to a level that does not reflect actual community interest. As a result, projections based on current usage measures are likely to under-represent the actual need. Library planners recognize that “many public libraries are operating under such constraints that examination of present use may provide a distorted picture of future growth opportunities.”¹

Facilities analysis shows that Utah’s public libraries currently fall below national size guidelines. One measure used to estimate approximate library size is the amount of square footage per capita. Consultants typically recommend a minimum of 0.4 square feet per capita for public library buildings serving more than 10,000 people; the ideal range is 0.6 - 0.8 or – for rapidly growing libraries – more. Much higher per-person space allocations must be provided for libraries serving fewer than 10,000 people, since even the smallest library must offer core holdings and services.² Many of Utah’s library buildings fall at the low end of this range, and some, like Duchesne County at 0.31 square feet per capita, Pleasant Grove at 0.3, the Salt Lake County System at 0.38, and all of the county bookmobile libraries, fall below even the minimum allocation of 0.4 square feet per capita.

Some smaller Utah public libraries noted that funding limitations would prevent them from significantly increasing their collections even if they had adequate space for expansion. Librarians report widespread patron interest in services not now offered. Many described the changing patron expectations that result when new residents move to a growing rural community from larger, more urban areas where they were accustomed to a broader array of library programs and services. In addition, the influx of new residents may change community demographics in ways that affect library usage



patterns. As more young families move to once-rural areas, for example, small libraries may face a sudden, dramatic increase in attendance at story hour and other children’s programs.

All of these indicators suggest that libraries that are currently at or near capacity and libraries in rapidly growing rural and suburban areas have potential needs that may be significantly greater than regression analysis would suggest.



PROJECTED LIBRARY EXPENDITURES

The study team used historic library expenditures for the past ten years (1991 through 1999), adjusted for inflation (with consumer price index data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics), to project expenditures over the next ten years. Typically expenditures have increased as population rises, and holdings and circulation tend to increase with expenditures.

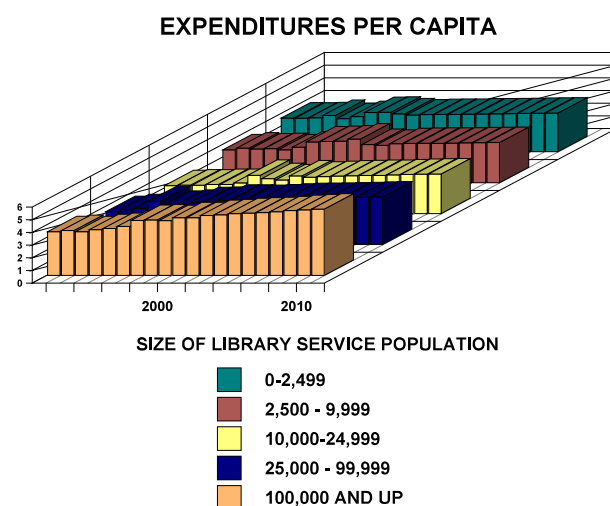
IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

As Utah enters the 21st century, predicting the future role of technology has a critical impact on planning. Various models have been suggested, ranging from the assumption that new information technologies will completely replace print materials to the assertion that traditional services will continue unchanged by the electronic media. The most frequently asked question is whether increased availability of and familiarity with electronic information sources will eliminate the need for brick-and-mortar libraries or reduce the amount of space required per capita.

The clear consensus among library experts and planners at this point is that electronic access will not eliminate the need for physical facilities. As library planners Philip Leighton and David C. Weber have stated, “with few exceptions, library collections will continue to grow indefinitely, though the growth rate for reference books, technical journals, technical reports, and, perhaps, certain classes of books will diminish over time.”³³ Jeannette Woodward adds that librarians need to “make it clear that the book will not disappear anytime soon and that the library will be delivering both print and electronic information for the foreseeable future.”³⁴ In fact, experience to date suggests that the adoption of electronic information technologies typically requires more, not less, space. As planners Lee B. Brawner and Donald K. Beck have

noted, “provision of database reference services does *not* diminish, but increases the need for reference assistance from staff.”³⁵ Additional staff and equipment need space. Patrons demand more workstations to access the information, and a computer workstation occupies more space than a study-table seat.

To assess the implications of these changes for library demand and space needs in Utah, the study



team conducted a survey of representative libraries (Orem City, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Washington County, Duchesne County, Kaysville City, Panguitch City, Salina City, and Santaquin City).

With the exception of the three counties that provide bookmobile service only (Daggett, Rich, and Piute), all of Utah’s public libraries currently have public Internet workstations, and demand for electronic services is high. Larger libraries report usage rates greater than 90% of capacity even in slow periods, and many report that all available computer stations are filled, with patrons waiting for access throughout much of the day. Usage is slightly lower in the smaller libraries, but even these libraries estimate that their computer stations have 60% utilization in



the slowest periods, and are filled to capacity at peak periods. Site visits tended to confirm these reports: computer seats were filled and patrons were waiting on the steps for the doors to open in the morning so that they could get access to computer workstations. In tourist areas, visitors also queue up for library computers, since in many smaller towns the library is the only place that provides online access. The Grand County Library in Moab recorded 235 non-resident requests for Internet access in one week in August. Like many, the Grand County Library does not have adequate workstations to serve its card-holding patrons, and has struggled to find ways to address this demand.

Larger libraries have developed web sites, and some provide electronic access to online public catalogs; the smaller libraries hope to implement these services. Medium and large libraries report high demand for electronic services among patrons of all ages and profiles. Smaller and more rural libraries have had less demand for electronic access, and that demand has tended to be concentrated among patrons younger than 30. As more people in the smaller communities become familiar with computers, however, that profile is changing. Librarians anticipate that demand in the smaller libraries will grow rapidly over the next ten years as patrons of all ages become more familiar with computers and aware of the resources available.

The librarians surveyed do not see any immediate limit to the growth in demand for technology services except availability and space. Current technology services are supported by general library funds, and communities have had difficulty raising funds adequate to meet the need for computers, staff to operate and maintain electronic systems, and electronic information resources and services such as subscription databases. Both Utah statute and local and national precedent rule out the possibility of charging user fees to pay for basic electronic services. Libraries may charge small fees to cover the cost of special services (such as interlibrary loans or additional custodial services required because of

public meeting room use). Some use fees to ration access to popular materials such as best sellers. But law and policy dictate that basic public library services must be provided free to eligible patrons.

Development of information technology supports library missions by providing new ways to access information. This, in turn, generates new demand for traditional library services. Public libraries of all sizes in urban, rural, and suburban locations throughout the state consistently report that the availability of Internet access has increased patron visits significantly.

As funds permit, Utah's public libraries will expand their electronic resources, and many may choose to rely primarily on electronic sources such as CD-ROMs and online data services to replace their print reference collections. For a variety of reasons, however, the growth of information technology will not reduce library space needs:

- ❖ The space formerly occupied by print materials and shelving will be needed for additional electronic workstations, and for additional staff to maintain electronic reference collections and the equipment that supports them. To date, libraries that have replaced hard copy catalogs and collections with electronic resources have typically found that, to provide equivalent service to a comparable number of patrons, they needed additional space when they converted to electronic format.
- ❖ Remote access to electronic materials may eventually reduce the number of in-library workstations needed to serve patrons. At present, however, only the state's largest public libraries are able to offer remote access even to catalogs and databases. For the foreseeable future, patrons will still come to the library to access reference sources and will demand an increasing number of



workstations to do so. In addition, providing access for individuals who cannot afford personal computers will continue to be an essential part of public libraries' missions. And patrons will continue to rely on the higher speed bandwidth service at their libraries for specialized tasks (research, graphics) that older and slower personal home computers cannot support.

- ❖ At least in the ten-year horizon, electronic resources will have little impact on the demand for popular reading materials in print format, which constitute the core holdings of most of the state's public libraries.
- ❖ Availability of electronic resources has drawn new patrons to the public libraries. This increases the need for equipment, staff, and space to support the collections. It also increases patron exposure to and interest in other library programs and services. Increased interest in turn generates additional need for staff, resources, and space.
- ❖ Utah's public libraries have expanded their traditional roles as community meeting and activity centers. Today's libraries offer a range of services including public events, regular programming for adults and children, and meeting rooms available for community use. Particularly in remote and rural communities, where the public library may be the only non-sectarian facility available at no charge for public gatherings, this function is a critical component of library services. It will generate an increasing demand for space as populations grow.

PLANNING AND FLEXIBILITY

By any measure of projected demand, Utah's public libraries will be expected to provide additional resources, services, and space in the coming years. Past indicators of library service, projected population growth, and regression analysis provide a baseline estimate of that growth.

The potential impact of changing demographics and information technology may result in actual growth that is significantly higher than this estimate in many Utah communities. The experience of Utah public libraries that have constructed new buildings in recent years suggests that the availability of new facilities may generate a sustained increase in circulation and demand for services, which will in turn require additional staffing, larger collections, and additional computer stations.

Meeting future demand for library services in the twenty-first century will require more than simply echoing population growth. Planning will be essential to provide flexibility in a time of widespread and rapid change. Libraries, as Leighton and Weber note, have been "changing more in the 1990s than any time in the past century" and must have "adaptability to address changing needs," including the "ability to assign" any library function to "any part of the facility" as well as the capacity to support technologies that cannot be imagined today.⁶

Therefore, to invest wisely in facilities that will continue to meet public needs well into the 21st century, each community needs to review its specific conditions carefully. Thorough planning, and planning that considers the many scenarios that may unfold over the anticipated life of the building, will be more necessary than ever. Because public libraries remain in use for generations, they must be designed with the flexibility to accommodate continued growth and changing uses and expectations.